

Shaking Hands

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/41908566) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/41908566>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham , Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Canon Universe , Established Relationship , Hurt/Comfort , Panic Attacks , Bombs , Whump , Hannibal Lecter Loves Will Graham , Caring Hannibal Lecter , Hurt Will Graham , Will Graham Knows , Light Angst , Angst with a Happy Ending , idk when this is set , like an au of season 1 , Murder Husbands , Implied/Referenced Cannibalism , Bomb Defusing , how romantic
Language:	English
Series:	Part 7 of i made an attempt at whumptober, the series
Stats:	Published: 2022-10-07 Words: 2,363 Chapters: 1/1

Shaking Hands

by [jumpinginmuddypuddles](#)

Summary

Hannibal's hand is outstretched towards him, halting, perfectly still. His face is as stony as ever. "Don't come close." He tells Will, teetering between calm and harsh. "There's something here."

Will's shoulders rise to his ears. "Something?" He echoes. "What something? One of your victims finally caught up to you?"

Hannibal purses his lips. His eyes glint, and if Will didn't know better, he would say he looks almost apprehensive. "A bomb." He says finally. The words slide off of his tongue as easily as a cool marble.

///

Whumptober 2022, Day 7, 'The Way You Shake and Shiver'

Notes

a lot of my fics level out from about 2-2.5k and i think most of the time that's about as long as i can make a singular scene last - after that it either becomes less relevant and i feel obliged to cut it out or i run out of steam and call it a day.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

The minute Will opens the door and steps into Hannibal's apartment, he knows something is wrong. The air smells vaguely like usual – like warm smoke and a heavy, herbal aroma all undercut by a slightly sharper, cleaner scent like bleach. Now, though, there's something obviously out of place. Something he can't quite identify, but it's there, like the entire world has shifted off of its axis. Feeling nothing but wrong.

That's why he doesn't drop his bag in the hall like he usually does. Instead, his grip around the handle tightens as he trails, reluctant and wary, into the next room. The thin soles of his shoes slap against the shining floorboards and create a discordant tune that his heart thrums nervously to.

"Will." Hannibal says sharply from across the room. "Don't move another inch."

There's an undercurrent of something in his voice not usually there. Anger, fear, maybe. A concoction of emotions he never shows on his face but Will has finely tuned himself to picking up on in his tells and his tone.

He freezes. Looks up through his curls.

Hannibal is standing in the middle of the room. Outlined by the window, he looks almost holy, his feet spread wide, twisted to stare at Will over his shoulder. Light catches in his carefully gelled hair and sets it aflame.

There's a tension to his shoulders, a strain across his back that someone else wouldn't have noticed. But Will does. He notices everything when it comes to Hannibal.

His feet barely skim the doorway, and yet Will's breath catches in his throat. *Wrong, wrong, wrong*, his instincts whisper, silk along the concave shell of his ear.

"What is it?" Will breathes.

Hannibal's hand is outstretched towards him, halting, perfectly still. His face is as stony as ever. "Don't come close." He tells Will, teetering between calm and harsh. "There's something here."

Will's shoulders rise to his ears. "Something?" He echoes. "What *something*? One of your victims finally caught up to you?"

Hannibal purses his lips. His eyes glint, and if Will didn't know better, he would say he looks almost apprehensive. "A bomb." He says finally. The words slide off of his tongue as easily as a cool marble.

Will breathes through his nose. He can't get air.

Hannibal watches him. It must hurt to have to twist his head and crane over his shoulder like that.

"Oh my god." He says. "*Oh my god.*" And again, more insistently this time. He slowly leans down and deposits his bag on the floor. It slumps lifelessly against the wall. "A bomb."

"Calm down, Will." Hannibal sounds mild. Will's hand comes up to cover his mouth. "Just breathe. It'll be fine."

There's a reason he hasn't moved. "You're standing on it." Will says raspily, and his eyes dart up to search Hannibal's face before his gaze flutters away again. "Oh fucking hell. You're standing on a bomb."

Hannibal gives him a singular, terse nod.

"We need to call someone." Will frowns as Hannibal immediately shakes his head in rebuttal.

“And explain this? They’ll search the house for other bombs, Will. They’ll look through our things. They’ll find...” He didn’t finish his sentence. He didn’t need to. The unspoken truth buzzed in the air between them.

Will snaps, “There could damn well be other bombs,” and hates the serene, almost unbothered quirk of his thin lips that Hannibal offers.

“You’re FBI. You know how to defuse a bomb.” Hannibal says, like he knows it as fact. Like he’s teaching Will something.

“I don’t know if you forgot,” Will replies scathingly. His heart lurches. Hannibal raises his pale eyebrows. “But I’m not technically FBI. I didn’t pass the training. I never *learnt*.”

Hannibal hums. He seems to ponder this for a moment, leisurely. His gaze dances across the floor, where the dull, eerie light from one of the lamps spreads across the floor. Will can’t tell what he’s thinking about, until finally Hannibal looks up at him.

“I know how to do it.” He settles on.

Will scoffs, but panic has sewn his throat tight shut and ruined his vocal chords, so all that comes out is a slight wheeze.

“Will,” Hannibal’s low, soft voice cradles him, it guides him back to reality. “It’s okay. I know how to do it. I’ll guide you.”

“Me?” Will whispers incredulously, but he knows Hannibal is right. He can’t move, can’t find the bomb, can’t get to the desk and certainly can’t defuse it.

Fuck.

His hands are all clammy; he clenches his fists around the soft fabric of his jacket and wrestles with the anxious beast that rages in his stomach and tears up his insides.

Hannibal would never say it, but he needs Will to do this for him.

He's never vocal, but there's a tight desperation around the crow's feet at his eyes.

"Okay." Will murmurs. It feels a little like defeat. "Okay. Tell me what to do."

Hannibal nods. "Step into the room. Careful. I triggered a pressure plate. The minute I step off this thing, it might explode. Aside from that I think we're safe."

"Right." Maybe if Will distances himself the way he does when he tries to put himself in someone else's shoes, it might take the nerves away. This is no time to be anxious, to crumble into little pieces and hyperventilate into oblivion – not when Hannibal needs him.

And Hannibal *does* need him.

"Any ideas where it is?"

Hannibal gestures with his chin towards the desk on his right. "Beneath there. That's where the thread goes." Will can see it, catching in the half-light, gleaming like fragile spiders' web.

"How did you manage to step on a pressure plate?" Will asks to distract himself as he carefully makes his way over to the desk. Every step is a question, a battle between his instinct to survive and his willpower.

Hannibal's eyes glint. "I was distracted. I ignored this little piece of thread. That was my mistake."

Will approaches the desk. His insides churn as he tightens a hold on the draw and pulls it gently out of the way. Another look at Hannibal gives him enough confidence to crouch down and peer into the dark beyond the cover of the table.

“What do you see?” Hannibal calls. He sounds almost curious. Amused. Like he’s entertained. When all of this is over, Will is going to punch his lights out.

“Not much.” Will squints. The darkness swallows everything. Amongst the pencil sharpenings and the dust bunnies— *there*. In the back corner. It looks almost like a delivery package. Wrapped tightly in duct tape, a flash of red wire makes itself known between the folds of grey tape.

Something that looks so harmless. Something that could end his life.

“Found it.” Will tries to say a bit louder, but his voice still comes out croaky.

“Great.” Hannibal replies. “It probably won’t go off if you move it. It all depends on the trigger switch. Which I’m currently standing on.”

“Wonderful.”

“Truly. Human innovation is astounding.” Hannibal either doesn’t hear or doesn’t care for Will’s dry tone. “Bring it out into the light.”

He leaves a little trail of sweat on the plastic — residue from his trembling fingers — as he pulls it out of the desk. His touch ghosts the edge, and then, when it’s fully visible, Will inches back slightly like a frightened rabbit. His chest is tight. He eyes the bomb.

“Well done.” Will is surprised at how sincere Hannibal sounds. When he turns to look at him, Hannibal’s eyebrows are furrowed down in that sympathetic way of his, and the smallest

encouraging smile lurks at the cornered pinch of his lip. “This is going to be intense, Will. I don’t want to lie to you.”

Will rubs his hands on his trousers to get rid of any remaining sweat. His skin chafes against the cargo material. He steels what remaining resolve he has and burrows it deep in the pit of his ribs. “Tell me what to do.”

“Get the letter-opener off my desk and make an incision on the side of the package.”

Will breathes an inhale so deep it whispers against the bottom of his lungs. His hand trembles ever so slightly as he reaches over for the knife on the desk. His throat is dry. His mouth is dry. In the same moment, his tongue swipes across his cracked lips and Will digs the knife into the corner of the bomb and swiped down.

“Good.” Hannibal says into the silence. He sounds almost breathless. “Now cut the top off. Do I need to remind you to be careful?”

Will just hums his negative. He has to readjust his hold on the knife— his hands are shaking worse now. Far worse. Like something foreign has taken control of the nerves under his skin and causes them to spasm.

His grip slips. He drops the opener, hears it clatter to the floor. “I *can*’t—“ He gasps. “I can’t do this. Don’t make me—“ His shoulders curl instinctively inwards, and he bites down on his knuckle to stop the hysterical sob that had been building in his throat from escaping through his teeth. A frightened noise slips past.

Hannibal interrupts him smoothly. “Will.” His voice is calm, warm. Will grabs onto the feeling with both hands and wills himself back to the present. “It’s okay. You’re okay.”

Hannibal stands not five feet from him, but still he feels like a thousand miles away.

Will shakes his head. “No. No—”

“Yes, Will. Yes you can.” Hannibal says patiently. “You can do this.”

Will crams his hands under his armpits and squeezes his eyes tight shut. He allows himself to quiver, for perhaps five seconds, listening to the rapid pound of his heart. Every muscle in his body tense. Then, slowly, he uncoils himself.

“Okay.” He rasps, and reaches across the floor for the letter opener again. “Okay.” He doesn’t know if he’s consoling himself or Hannibal.

The shake is still there, so bad that Will grips both hands on the handle to try and ease the shivering. He cuts dutifully into the packet, grateful for the whetted, razor-sharp edge of the knife. Is this how Hannibal felt when he cut into his patients as a surgeon? The top flays open, and Will places the knife down.

He just focuses on maintaining his breathing.

Panic destroys logic. Panic, and he’s dead for sure.

That can’t happen.

Hannibal needs him.

“Now what?” He mutters.

“Pull back where you’ve made the cut.” Hannibal says. His accent is more discernable now, as though it has grown thicker in his panic. Less easy to control, something rawer and more instinctual. “There’s always an explosive charge connected to battery power. That gives it the heat to explode. That usually leads to the trigger— switch, which in this case was the tripwire.”

It sounds like something out of those old spy movies.

Will follows Hannibal's instructions. Earlier in their collective life, he might have thought Hannibal tricked him, tried to kill him or leave him for dead. Not now, though. Not now they're together. One united force.

Not when Will can see Hannibal's vulnerability, lying still amongst the rest of his officious emotions like a baby deer, playing dead in the way of a predator and hoping to be lost in the long grass.

He's never thought of Hannibal as frail before.

"And then?"

Hannibal swallows. "Disconnect the battery from the charge. Cut the wire." There's a stagnant silence. Will picks up the knife again. His hands, which have never shaken so much before but it seems all they can do now, clutch the handle so tightly the creases of sewing thread across the smooth leather press into his palms.

"Be careful." Hannibal says. His voice comes out sort of strangled.

Will grits his teeth so hard his gums ache. He just wishes his hands would stop *trembling*.

He peels back the duct tape and peers inside. The parts of the bomb had just been wrapped tightly together, but he can discern the larger object which must be the explosive, positioned beside a smaller, more cylindrical shape. The battery.

Right. Okay.

Rain patters against the glass behind him.

Breathe.

Will leans over. He eyes the plastic-coated wiring splayed out beneath the components like squirming little snakes. *Don't shake. Don't shake. Shake and you're dead.*

Will braces himself, leans down and presses the blade against one of the wires– the largest that runs between the battery and the charge. He squeezes his eyes shut and braces for pain.

He waits.

And waits.

Nothing happens.

Then a warm pair of arms encompass him, a hand pries the letter-opener from his grip. Will smells cologne – dewey and fresh. Hannibal.

“Is it okay?” He murmurs. Hannibal hums. Will can feel it buzzing through the air. His hold on Will tightens as Will leans back into him, covering his face with his hands with a muttered, *“Jesus fucking Christ.”*

"It's okay." Hannibal presses a chastened kiss to Will's temple. “Thank you.” He says into Will's curly hair, his voice muffled and thick. “Thank you.”

Will feels his hands being pried from his face as Hannibal's hands – smooth and large and unscarred and everything Will's are not – straighten each of his fingers individually, massaging the tension from the tendons there. Will lets him do it, somewhere between amused and disinterested.

He leans back into his chest, surrounds himself with his lover as the adrenaline clawing desperately under his skin finally seems to subside. As though settled. As though tamed.

"Never ask me to do anything like that again." Will says, his voice guttural and raspy. "I swear to fucking God, Hannibal. Stop making so many damned enemies. Don't let them into the house."

"You make them sound like dogs."

"Are pigs and dogs so different to you?" Will scoffs. "Get a proper office elsewhere. Or just kill them already."

He can feel Hannibal chuckle. "Of course."

"I'll hold you to that." Will advises him.

"Dinner's on me." Hannibal teases. Will conceals his smile by smothering his face in the crook of Hannibal's neck.

End Notes

THIS ISN'T HOW BOMBS WORK BUT IVE DUMBED IT DOWN A BUNCH BECAISE I DONT WANT THEM TO BE GOING THROUGH LIKE A 20 STEP BY STEP MANUAL ON HOW TO ACTUALLY DEFUSE A BOMB OK

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!